

## **REMARKS**

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

### **I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS**

Claims 1-31 are pending in this application. Claim 3 has been amended herewith to specifically recite all of the limitations of prior claim 1, in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, Claims 13, 14 and 22-31 have been allowed. Claims 1, 2, 8-12, and 15-21 have been canceled without prejudice.

Support for the above amendment may be found throughout the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been added by virtue of this amendment.

### **II. 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) REJECTIONS**

**(i) Claims 1 and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,067,144 to Murouchi (hereinafter Murouchi).**

**(ii) Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,870,593 B2 to Satoh (hereinafter Satoh).**

In response, Applicants respectfully assert that above rejection to claims 1 and 8-10 based upon Murouchi and the rejection to claim 11 based upon the combination of Murouchi and Satoh are now moot.

Claim 3 was indicated in the instant Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claim 1. In this regard, claim 3 has been amended herewith to recite all of the limitations recited in prior claim 1, in order to expedite prosecution of the present application. Thus, amended claim 3 is allowable over the Murouchi and Satoh references.

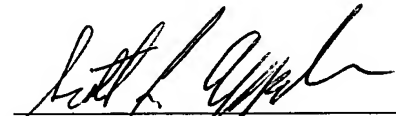
Moreover, previously objected to claims 4-7 are also patentable over Murouchi and Satoh because these claims depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of claim 3 and thus removal of the objections to these dependent claims is likewise requested. It is also noted that the above amendment to claim 3 was made for the purpose of expediting prosecution of the present application, but does not constitute an admission regarding the merits of the rejections made in the instant Office Action.

**III. CONCLUSION:**

In summary, applicant respectfully submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to that end is earnestly solicited.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in furthering prosecution of the subject application, applicant requests that the undersigned be contacted at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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